



JOHN A. WAGNER
DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street • Sacramento, CA 95814 • www.cdss.ca.gov



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
GOVERNOR

April 13, 2010

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE I-20-10

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order
- Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by CDSS

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL FOOD STAMP PROGRAM COORDINATORS

SUBJECT: INFORMING THE HOMELESS OF FOOD STAMP (FS)
AVAILABILITY

REFERENCE: MANUAL OF POLICY AND PROCEDURES (MPP) SECTION
63-300.5(i) AND FEDERAL REGULATION 7 CFR 273.2

The purpose of this letter is to remind counties of their obligation to meet the needs of homeless food stamp applicants and recipients. The homeless are particularly vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition. For this reason, it is imperative that county agencies make a special effort to ensure that this group has access to the nutritional assistance offered by the Food Stamp Program (FSP). Counties must ensure that homeless applicants and recipients receive timely, accurate, and fair services. Counties must also provide a method of certifying and issuing benefits to eligible homeless individuals in accordance with federal regulations at 7 CFR 273.2, which describes fair access to benefits for homeless households. Counties should examine their policies and procedures to ensure that they are not requiring county office pick-up regardless of distance to office and lack of public transportation, or that they are only allowing general delivery.

Counties are required to provide various options regarding mailing alternatives for homeless applicants and recipients to facilitate this population's participation in the program. These options may include allowing the use of post office boxes; alternative mailing addresses, general delivery pick-up (U.S. Postal Service), and pick-up at the local welfare office. However, homeless households cannot be restricted to only one option for mail delivery/pick-up.

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In addition, where the means of mail communication becomes a barrier to eligibility, such as a lack of an address to obtain California identification, counties must assist the applicant or recipient to obtain adequate documentation/identification [MPP 63-300.5(i)]. This may be a two-step process, such as assisting the individual in getting a birth certificate, so the recipient can get an ID.

If you have any questions regarding this notice, please contact Rosie Avena at (916) 654-1514 or e-mail at rosie.avena@dss.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

CHRISTINE WEBB-CURTIS, Chief
Food Stamp Branch